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JAMES ANDERSON

Sir Walter Scott as Historical Novelist

Part II

Scott's practice in historical fiction

Introduction

Scott's practice as a romancer tallies so closely with the precepts summarised in the previous section, as to arouse suspicion that the latter were framed not so much as a guide to action as a justification thereof—a common enough thing. If it be correct that his attitude to authenticity varies somewhat, this merely reflects the fact that your historical novelist, although sure to be unauthentic sometimes, is equally sure to be authentic at other times, since no man will go out of his way to alter everything on principle.

In reviewing Scott's practice, it has been borne in mind that this study is addressed to readers who know a good deal about Scott; it seems unnecessary, therefore, to point out in detail how nearly all the novels employ a historical background, whereas the foreground is usually occupied either by fictitious characters, or by fictitious incidents involving historical characters. The extreme case of *Rokeby* is however worth mentioning; this poem has no historical characters and no historical incidents, but the Civil War background was required, says Scott, to lend probability to "extraordinary adventures of a domestic nature."¹ This is avoiding the well-known paths of history² with a vengeance.

Nor is it necessary to explain what Scott himself has explained about the sources from which he drew, not only his plots, but also those details which he valued so highly for their life-giving properties. Scott's introductions and notes are very frank about these matters; no man ever had less value for trade secrets than Sir Walter Scott.

However, Scott did not explain everything. When Richie Moniplies, in *Nigel*, recalls in conversation how King James VI once fled down the back stairs at Holyrood Palace, after being roused from slumber by the irruption of the Earl of Bothwell, in such a hurry that he had

¹ *Letters*, III, 216.

² *Fair Maid*, I, 25.

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not even time to put on his breeches, Scott supplies no footnote; but if the reader happens to go through the *Minstrelsy*³ shortly after, he will recognise the incident in a passage from Birrell's *Diary*, quoted by Scott in his notes to that great ballad collection, many years before writing the novel. Cases like this, once noticed, are worth setting down; they do not revolutionise our ideas about Scott, but they deepen our impression that the Waverley novels are an epitome, not merely of one man's personal experience, but of the records of several nations over many centuries.

Even when Scott's writings have been completely combed in this way, we may suspect that there is still a great deal to be learned about the origin of Scott's material. Students have been producing books and articles on Scott for a century and a half, and there must be much miscellaneous information to be gleaned from this ocean of writing, as listed in Dr. J. C. Corson's *Bibliography of Sir Walter Scott*. But this procedure, while it would result in an interesting compilation, would exclude the possibility of new discoveries. For the present purpose, therefore, a quantity of Scott's source material in history has been studied. Ideally, all the history he read should have been read after him; in practice, it was possible only to sample this mass, but of course the books selected were those which seemed most promising, i.e. (1) the historical texts edited by Scott, and (2) books on Scottish history dealing with the period roughly from 1660 to 1745, together with some books on British history in the same period. In addition, the most important historical works written in Scotland between about 1750 and 1832 were read. The result of this study (not wholly anticipated, it is hoped, by previous students) is presented below, and will, perhaps, form an interesting supplement to Scott's own revelations, besides illustrating the practical operation of his views on historical fiction. In particular, readers will note the freedom with which details from history are transferred by Scott to other contexts, sometimes ludicrously far removed from the original, yet without sacrifice of probability. A connection will appear between "period" authenticity and imaginative literature. This study may, further, help to show that English history is a not unimportant source for the Scotch novels; and, finally, that whatever period of history Scott may select for his background, the feelings, opinions, and experiences of a Scotch lawyer in the early 19th Century are well to the fore.

In the matter of Scott's alterations to established historical fact,

³ *Minstrelsy*, I, 153.

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few would wish to compile lists of these, and fewer still to read them. One or two, however, have a special interest, and are worth a paragraph.

Finally, a closing section attempts a study of Scott's attitudes, or prejudices, as displayed in the novels, to see whether the freedom of the fiction-writer has made any difference to the pattern displayed in his formal historical work. It will be shown that, in certain respects at least, the novelist's liberty seems to have enabled him to adopt more just and more comprehensive views than are to be found in most of the historical work of the time including his own.

The Historical Sources of the Waverley Novels: "Strict" and "Free" Writing.

Where Scott was unable to avoid "the well-known paths of history" in his novels, he always followed contemporary accounts, whatever he may have done in *Marmion*. In *Waverley* (1814), a certain amount of matter is transferred straight into the story from the historians of the '45 — that is, from the actual historical context of real life into the identical historical context in fiction. This matter, drawn chiefly from writers like John Home, relates mainly to the military operations, and in particular, of course, to Prestonpans and Clifton. Such a proceeding is only to be expected; and the omission of the detail of such borrowings from our review of this and other novels offers one permissible method of shortening what threatens to be a long account. The interesting point is that this policy of direct incorporation accounts for so small a proportion of the complete work.

Another class of material whose detail must be omitted is that general information about the state of Scotland, and especially of the Highlands, in 1745, which provides part of the background of the novel. When Scott describes the patriarchal system, black-mail, cattle-stealing, and so on, he is using information which he probably had from various sources — the traditional stories of his senior contemporaries, like Abercromby of Tullibody; MS. accounts, like those of Graham of Gartmore; and printed books, like Burt's *Letters from the North of Scotland*. Sometimes even a small detail may be common knowledge; John Home may tell us that Charles Edward had fair hair, but it might be rash to name him as the source for Scott's knowledge of the circumstance, as the existence of a song like "The Yellow-haired Laddie" warns us that this little piece of knowledge was general.

The interesting things, the things which demonstrate Scott's special technique as well as his special historical knowledge, are those features

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of *Waverley* and the rest which are probably derived from one source or "source-area," and which are transferred from a historical context into a fictitious one.

For *Waverley*, the historians of the '45 do not seem to provide much in this way. The dejection of Fergus McIvor after the decision at Derby,⁴ contrasted with his enthusiasm during the advance into England, is of course transferred from the Prince himself, and the exclamation "God save King James"⁵ from Balmerino. A less obvious case is that of the blacksmith, John Mucklewrath, who fell foul of *Waverley* while repairing weapons for resistance to the Jacobites at the beginning of the rising. Home, Elcho, and Johnstone all mention a Jacobite blacksmith who organised attacks on the royal army during the retreat to the north; and, therefore, though Scott's blacksmith has changed sides and operated at the other end of the rising, there seems no reason to doubt that the suggestion came from the histories. Balmawhapple, in the novel, was fired at from Stirling Castle, as was the Prince in real life.⁶

But there are many links between *Waverley* and the history of the Jacobite movement and the Highlands before 1745. During the Jacobite occupation of Edinburgh, Fergus McIvor hints at intrigues and jealousies at the Holyrood "court"; he congratulates *Waverley* on declining to compete with others for the post of aide-de-camp to the Prince,⁷ and on another occasion complains that court intrigue has prevented him from assuming the rank of earl, to which he is entitled. Now, this is not the sort of bickering reported by the historians of the '45, who speak only of the jealousy which hampered Lord George Murray, and the unpopularity of the Irish officers. On the other hand, Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, speaks, in his *Memoirs*,⁸ of a St. Germain's intrigue of 1702, whereby a McLean was balked of an appointment as gentlemen of the Privy Chamber to the "king"; and Lovat himself demanded a Duke's patent in 1742. These episodes, indeed, seem more appropriate to a court in peace-time than to the H.Q. of a very mobile expedition. Lovat, however, renewed his demand in 1745 before

⁴ *Waverley*, II, 273; John Home, *History of the Rebellion in 1745* (London, 1802), p. 147. Henceforth cited as Home.

⁵ *Waverley*, II, 392.

⁶ *Waverley*, II, 89; Home, p. 78.

⁷ *Waverley*, II, 104.

⁸ London, 1797, p. 122.

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he would "come out"; this brings reality very near to the fiction.⁹ It may here be remarked that although Scott mentions Lovat in the notes to *Waverley* as the original of some external features in Fergus Mclvor, there is no resemblance between the two characters apart from family pride. Readers of Lovat's *Memoirs* may well wonder whether they are genuine; they recall Thackeray's *Barry Lyndon*, the apologia of an odious personage whose true character unconsciously gives the lie to the apology on every page.

The mutiny in Waverley's regiment, instigated by Donald Bean Lean,¹⁰ does not seem to have any foundation in the record of the '45, and seems to be borrowed from the first Jacobite rising of 1689, when disaffection in the government forces was real, as well as more likely than in 1745. Both General Mackay's *Memoirs*¹¹ and Captain Creighton's *Memoirs*¹² speak of unsuccessful Jacobite intrigues in King William's army. — Mackay was William's commander at Killiecrankie; and Creighton, who acted as Jacobite agent in that period, was an officer who had seen much service in Scotland under the later Stewarts. His memoirs were afterwards "ghosted" by Swift, and therefore qualified for a place in Scott's edition of the Dean. Mackay's book, though not published till 1833, was known to Scott in MS.

Sir Walter Scott wrote no novel about the rising of 1715 — *Rob Roy* ends for practical purposes at the outbreak — but the accounts he had read of it exercised a considerable though hidden influence on the Waverley novels.

Students of the Jacobites are familiar with that remarkable character, the Master of Sinclair, whose memoirs of 1715 were annotated by Scott in MS., and are quoted by him as early as the *Minstrelsy*. When Scott describes Balmawhapple's troop quartering for the night in Falkirk, without military precautions, and spending the evening over the bottle in careless security,¹³ he is reproducing Sinclair's bitter complaints about the behaviour of the gentlemen under his own command during his

⁹ *Tales of a Grandfather* (in *Misc. Prose Works*, XXII-XXVIII), V, 93. Henceforth cited as *Grandfather*.

¹⁰ *Waverley*, II, 19.

¹¹ Hugh Mackay, *Memoirs of the War Carried on in Scotland and Ireland, 1689-1691*, ed. J. M. Hog, P. F. Tytler, and Adam Urquhart (Edinburgh, 1833), for the Bannatyne Club, p. 28. Henceforth cited as Mackay.

¹² *The Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Walter Scott, 19 vols. (Edinburgh, 1814), X, 179. Henceforth cited as *Swift*.

¹³ *Waverley*, II, 90.

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expedition across Fife to seize some Government arms at Burntisland.¹⁴ The account of 1715 in *Tales of a Grandfather* includes this episode from Sinclair, and does not forget the indiscipline of the Jacobites who crowded into the alehouses instead of posting sentries. — The '45 historians may speak of a captured Hanoverian officer being permitted by the Jacobites to go to London on private business, like Colonel Talbot in *Waverley*; but Sinclair does.¹⁵ — Fergus MacIvor, in the retreat from Derby, is made to speak of the illusions of the Highland Jacobites, who think the Government's vengeance will fall upon the Lowlanders, leaving themselves safe in their poverty and their mountain fastnesses; this very contrast is made by Sinclair¹⁶ with much bitterness at two points, though not in quite the same words, and without the picturesque Highland proverb quoted by Fergus.¹⁷ — Finally, the Baron of Bradwardine must surely owe a great deal to Sinclair. Both commanded the horse; both were given to lecturing on military tactics; both were punctilious martinets and duellists; both were somewhat Frenchified (Sinclair uses quite a number of French words); both indulged freely in Latin quotation. It is true that, just as McIvor is a very different character from Lovat, so Bradwardine is not to be identified with Sinclair: Sinclair was too cynical, too bitterly censorious, and too half-hearted in the cause; yet the connection seems undeniable. Bradwardine's daughter was married from the house of a kinsman at a place called the Duchran; now this name is doubtless not unique in the Highlands, but it is at least curious that Sinclair should mention such a place, and that Scott should add to the MS. a marginal note: "The Duchroun is in the Forest of Glenartney. It is well-known to sportsmen as famous for moor-game, *me teste*."¹⁸

So much for the historians of the Jacobite movement. — It is difficult to decide the precise extent of Scott's indebtedness to Edward Burt's *Letters from the North of Scotland*. This book describes the experiences of an Englishman who spent some time in Inverness and its neighbourhood during the 1720's; it is full of matter about the Highlands which can be found in Scott, and Scott certainly refers quite frequently to the book by name; only one cannot be quite sure

¹⁴ John, Master Sinclair, *Memoirs of the Insurrection in Scotland, in 1715* . . . With Notes by Sir Walter Scott, ed. J. Macknight and D. Laing (Edinburgh, 1858), p. 95 ff. Henceforth cited as Sinclair.

¹⁵ Sinclair, p. 298.

¹⁶ Sinclair, pp. 26, 300.

¹⁷ *Waverley*, II, 275-6.

¹⁸ Sinclair, p. 135.

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that his information came from no other source. Two cases of apparently certain connection do occur, however. On the way to Glennaquoich, Evan Dhu Maccombich enumerates, with much pride, the "tail" or personal entourage of a highland chief—the henchman, bard, *bladier*, *gillymore*, *gilly-casfliuch*, *gilly-comstrian*, *gilly-trushbarnish*, the piper, the piper's man, and a dozen boys of the belt. He is here following a passage in Burt with considerable fidelity—a passage reprinted in 1805 by Selkirk,¹⁹ and quoted by Scott himself in *The Lady of the Lake* (1810).²⁰—Documentary evidence on the patriarchal Highland system must be scarce indeed, when men like Scott are found giving prominence among their sources to the letters of a "foreign" visitor. Yet why should one be surprised? Much of the earlier history of India is derived from the reports of visiting Greeks, Chinese, and Arabs.—Calum Beg's attempt to shoot Waverley dead for a supposed insult to his chief²¹ must be derived from a more or less identical incident reported in Burt, and quoted by Scott in *The Lady of the Lake*.²² Burt refers to the zealous young clansman as "that little vermin," whereas Scott's Col. Talbot merely calls him "that little cockatrice" and "that little limb of the devil."²³

Although we here find Scott looking at the Highlands through Saxon eyes, as is no doubt inevitable, he does employ some native tradition, much of which must have reached him by word of mouth. When Bradwardine reprobrates the Highland chiefs for disdaining to hold their lands in a sheep's skin, i.e. by charter,²⁴ he is quoting a remark ascribed to the well-known McDonald of Keppoch by Scott himself.²⁵ One of the little circumstances with which Scott brightens up the historical account of the action at Prestonpans is the incident of the Highland seer, who, the day before the battle, restrained Calum Beg from shooting Col. Gardiner because he saw the winding-sheet already

¹⁹ Thomas Douglas, 5th Earl of Selkirk, *Observations on the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland* . . . 2nd edition (Edinburgh, 1806), App. p. xii.

²⁰ P. 153; see Edward Burt, *Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland* (1754), ed. Robert Jamieson, 2 vols. (London, 1818), II, 61. Henceforth cited as Burt. Scott contributed to the 1818 edition.

²¹ *Waverley*, II, 261.

²² p. 108.

²³ *Waverley*, II, 248, 308.

²⁴ *Waverley*, I, 243.

²⁵ *Swift*, X, 164; Culloden Papers Review, 55; *Prose Works*, XX: *Grandfather*, III, 366.

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high on the Colonel's breast. It looks like a poetical device to heighten the effect of Gardiner's death in battle the following day, and so no doubt it is;²⁶ but the story is again told by Scott in connection with a traditional account of the clan battle of Glenfruin in 1603, which asserts that the McGregors were encouraged to victory by a seer who declared he saw the winding-sheet high on the breasts of the enemy leaders.²⁷—The cateran Donald Bean Lean's objection to supreme unction as a waste of oil²⁸ is acknowledged as a borrowing from Rob Roy tradition in Scott's long and curious introduction to *Rob Roy*, 1829.²⁹—Although Donald is fairly obviously a preliminary Rob Roy with a difference, we have the word of Stewart of Garth³⁰ that a Donald Bane Leane was active as a depredator after '45.

Going back into the 17th Century, we find one or two echoes from Covenanting times in *Waverley*, apart from the talk of Gifted Gilfillan, which raises a subject better dealt with in connection with *Old Mortality* and *Heart of Midlothian*. When Mr. Morton, hearing of Cope's march to Inverness, exclaims "Is the man a coward, a traitor or an idiot?"—he is echoing Wodrow, who stigmatises the leader of the extremist faction among the insurgents at Bothwell Brig as "traitor, coward, or fool";³¹ Scott cites this passage from Wodrow in the *Minstrelsy*,³² and, at the moment of reproducing it in the mouth of Mr. Morton, he is about to bring the Cameronian Gilfillan on the stage.—Evan Dhu, in one of Scott's greatest passages, offers, during his trial for high treason, to go back to the Highlands and fetch six of the McIvors to suffer vicariously for their chief, and rebukes those who doubt his word as persons who "ken neither the heart of a Highlandman nor the honour of a gentleman."³³ Highland honour did in fact stand very high in those times; Stewart of Garth mentions the case of a soldier under close arrest who was allowed to go home on urgent business on giving his word of honour to return, which he duly

²⁶ *Waverley*, II, 163.

²⁷ *Rob Roy*, I, 8.

²⁸ *Waverley*, II, 310.

²⁹ *Rob Roy*, I, 60.

³⁰ David Stewart of Garth, *Sketches . . . of the Highlanders of Scotland* (1821), 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1822), I, 43. Henceforth cited as *Sketches*.

³¹ Robert Wodrow, *Sufferings of the Church of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1721-2), II, 67. Henceforth cited as Wodrow.

³² *Minstrelsy*, II, 231.

³³ *Waverley*, II, 378.

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kept.³⁴ But the actual words put into Evan's mouth are strongly reminiscent of the reply made by the famous Covenanter, Baillie of Jerviswoode, to the offer of life on condition of turning king's evidence: "They who can make such a proposal to me know neither me nor my country."³⁵ The story is in *Grandfather* (III, 267) (1st ed.).

Donald Bean Lean, according to Col. Talbot,³⁶ was hanged along with his followers, enjoying the distinction of a higher gallows than they. Like one or two other of the circumstances already discussed, this seems rather improbable for 1746, although the rash assertor of such a proposition is always liable to be confounded by the production of unexpected evidence. It seems highly likely, however, that Scott was thinking of Birrel's *Diary*, where there is an entry under 1604, quoted by Scott in the *Rob Roy* Introduction,³⁷ to the effect that this disagreeable distinction was conferred on McGregor of Glenstrae. Further, there is at least one other precedent: Hailes' *Annals*³⁸ states that in the wars of independence with England, the Earl of Athole, on being put to death with other prisoners, was graced with a higher gallows than the rest on account of his relationship to the English king.

We know that the hunting-party³⁹ which Waverley attended with McIvor just before the "Forty-five" broke out has no historical warrant, although Mar staged such an affair in 1715 to cover a Jacobite assembly. The detail of the *Waverley* hunting-party is, however, clearly derived from an older source. Thomas Pennant⁴⁰ quotes an account (by the jurist William Barclay), of a highland deer-hunt held for Queen Mary's entertainment in 1563, during which the herd charged the huntsmen, forcing them to fall flat on their faces and be overrun, like Waverley and his companions in the novel. Barclay's account says there were several killed and wounded; only Waverley became a casualty in the story. The most fastidious critic could hardly object to this 16th Century borrowing, since such an incident could

³⁴ *Sketches*, II, 414.

³⁵ Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland* . . . , 2 vols. (in 3) (Edinburgh, 1771-88), Pt. I, Bk. I, 29. Henceforth cited as Dalrymple.

³⁶ *Waverley*, II, 311.

³⁷ *Rob Roy*, I, 13.

³⁸ David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes, *Annals of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1776-9), II, 14. Henceforth cited as Hailes.

³⁹ *Waverley*, I, 334.

⁴⁰ Burt, II, 67; also Pennant, *Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides*, 1772, 2 parts (London, 1790), Pt. II, 64.

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occur in any period whatever, and is therefore ideally "general." — The Pennant just mentioned was the well-known Welsh antiquary, much kinder to Scotland than English visitors like Burt, whose talk is of dirt and vermin, and who display that irritating virtue which, in their descendants, inveighs against the Scotch habit of bathing only once a week.

Irish history contributes one little point to *Waverley*. — Sir Everard Waverley is said ⁴¹ to have limited his parliamentary orations in Godolphin's time to "zealous Noes." Swift, in a satire on the Irish Parliament of his day, says in verse: "Dick with zealous noes and ayes Could roar as loud as Stentor."⁴²

Finally, there is a small contribution from mediaeval Iceland. Lucky Macleary, on hearing a brawl break out in her change-house or tavern, rushed into the room and flung her plaid with great dexterity over the swords of the combatants.⁴³ The same incident occurs in Scott's abstract — written in 1814, the year of *Waverley* — of the *Eyrbyggja Saga*,⁴⁴ which is a compendium of old Icelandic history and tradition.

This undoubtedly fragmentary account of the historical sources of *Waverley*, beginning with the historians of the "Forty-five" and working backwards through Scottish history, with a glance or two at other histories to finish with, should give some idea of the richness of the Scott background. It is further to be borne in mind that Scott drew as liberally on an equally rich literary background, not to mention the background of personal experience which every artist must have, to produce a most extraordinary amalgam of the life, experience and feelings of Western man through many generations, set out in the long series of the *Waverley* novels.

The source of the "long-lost heir" story of *Guy Mannering* (1815) has been the subject of some discussion, but as this concerns, principally, lawsuits in the private life of the 18th and early 19th Century, it seems out of place here. The novel seems to owe practically nothing to general history, and is one of the very few of which this can be said. As the action of the story is supposed to take place between about 1760 and 1780, it may seem natural that the novelist should draw little on the older history; and yet the next novel, *The Antiquary*

⁴¹ *Waverley*, I, 129.

⁴² *Swift*, X, 511-12.

⁴³ *Waverley*, I, 195.

⁴⁴ *Prose Works*, V, 368.

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(1816), whose period is the end of the 18th Century, is as full of history as any professedly historical novel. Nor is this fact wholly explained by the antiquarian hobby of the chief character.

We have already asserted above that the historians of the 1715 rebellion have had a marked, if indirect, influence on the Waverley novels. The hand of the Master of Sinclair can be seen in the account of Sir Anthony Wardour's behaviour in the '45 rising.⁴⁵ The Wardours were wine-glass Jacobites, who tamely allowed themselves, and their horses, to be seized at the beginning of the rebellion by the "Whig burghers" of Perth, who sallied forth for the purpose under their Provost, Oldbuck's father. According to Sinclair,⁴⁶ "the good Tories [in 1715] satisfied themselves with drinking loyal healths," and "recruiting with wine, and fighting with bottles and glasses"; whereas "the Whigs armed themselves expeditiously throughout the whole country"; "justices had orders from Court to seize the horses and arms of all disaffected persons," and "the Whig magistrates and burghers of Perth had already made themselves masters of that town." Of all the Jacobite historians whom the Scott student may read, Sinclair is the one who most vividly recalls the Waverley novels.

Several cases occur in this novel of the transference of historical material from one context to another. Sir Arthur Wardour's family history⁴⁷ reported the marriage, in 1150, between the reluctant "Saxon" heiress of Knockwinnock (a lowland barony) and a Norman, Sir Richard Wardour. It asserted further that she had an illegitimate son by some cousin, who grew up with the name of Malcolm Misticot, and in due course expelled his legitimate younger half-brother from the family property, with Highland assistance, causing much disturbance until he was defeated and obliged to turn monk. The point of this story for the plot of *The Antiquary* is that the Wardour family derived from the Misticot affair a hereditary horror of bastardy, which hindered the supposedly illegitimate Lovel's courtship of Miss Wardour. Scott probably placed the story in the 12th Century because the pretension of an illegitimate son to be regarded as the lawful heir would be quite inappropriate to a later period of feudal society; but the story can scarcely be derived from any source in the 12th Century, which is virtually pre-historic so far as the details of Scottish family history are concerned. The source must be sought in a context where

⁴⁵ *Antiquary*, I, 79.

⁴⁶ Sinclair, pp. 9, 13, 16, 90.

⁴⁷ *Antiquary*, II, 29, 42.

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central government is weak, and where illegitimate sons can claim property succession rights with some show of justification; in fact, a story does occur in Scott's sources about the remote tribe of the Macleods, according to which⁴⁸ eight bastard sons excluded the legal heir from his property, and that as late as the end of the 16th Century. One cannot be sure that Scott had this particular passage in mind; but some idea that the tale would be more easily believed of the Celtic clans than of the completely feudalised Lowlands may have lurked in Scott's mind when he represented Misticot's supporters as Highlanders. The suggestion of resistance to Norman infiltration, which actually occurred in the 12th Century, lends another touch of "authenticity" to the fiction. While thus subtly demonstrating how to achieve the illusion of authenticity where authentic material is scarce, Scott seems to spoil things by attributing a fully-developed science of heraldry to the 12th Century;⁴⁹ but this may be regarded not as an indiscreet licence but as a genuine error, since heraldic enthusiasts were slow to admit the comparatively recent origin of their system.

Oldbuck quotes⁵⁰ a pseudo-mediaeval epitaph, beginning "Here lyeth John o' ye Girnell, Erth has ye nit and heuen ye kernell." It seems difficult not to connect this with some lines of the late 17th Century, preserved in the Jacobite Robert Mylne's MS. collection:⁵¹ "Her coffin is of ane old girnell, Earth keeps the shell, the deil the kernel." (Scott was acquainted with Mylne's collection.)

Although the natural tendency of the historical novelist is to fill out obscure early periods with later material, examples of the converse occur in Scott, as we have already seen. In his *Secret History of the Court of King James*, and in the notes to *The Fortunes of Nigel*,⁵² Scott quotes an account by John Lilly, the astrological quack, of a treasure-hunt in Westminster Abbey by Davy Ramsey, clockmaker to King James. The searcher and his friends "played the hazel rods round about the cloisters," and when "the rods turned one over another," the labourers were ordered to dig, and brought up a coffin. The searchers

⁴⁸ *Macfarlane's Genealogical Collections*, Scottish History Society, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1900), I, 65. Scott was quoting from Walter Macfarlane's MSS. as early as the *Minstrelsy*.

⁴⁹ *Antiquary*, II, 29.

⁵⁰ *Antiquary*, I, 179.

⁵¹ Quoted in James Maidment, *A Book of Scottish Pasquils* (Edinburgh, 1827), p. 76.

⁵² *Secret History of the Court of James the First*, ed. Scott, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1811), I, 265; *Nigel*, I, 394.

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then went into the church, where a fierce wind began to blow, so that the party thought demons were about, and Ramsay's partner looked pale. — It is obvious that this story has been adapted for the scenes at St. Ruth's priory in the novel of *The Antiquary*; first for the quack Dousterswivel's search for water among the ruins, using a hazel twig, then for the midnight scene in which the "adept" and Sir Arthur Wardour are frightened from their treasure-hunt by the ghostly howling of Edie Ochiltree, and finally the discovery of Misticot's treasure in his grave. This case is interesting, not only because the story is brought forward from the early 17th Century to the end of the 18th, but because a story about Westminster Abbey is transferred to the ruins of Arbroath.

An early reminiscence seems to be involved in Scott's use of the name "Lord Geraldin" for the eldest son of a northern Scottish noble of the 18th Century, the Earl of Glenallan. Many readers must have wondered how the name of the great Anglo-Irish family of the Fitzgeralds or Geraldines has found its way into a Scottish environment; the answer may be that the Mackenzies of Kintail traced their ancestry to a 13th Century Geraldine who was rewarded with lands in Kintail for service against the Norwegians at Largs, and who is referred to by Scott in the *Minstrelsy*,⁵³ and in some detached verses.⁵⁴

Jonathan Oldbuck is responsible for a good many reminiscences of the Scottish antiquarian writers of the 17th and 18th Centuries. It was pointed out long ago by Sir Daniel Wilson,⁵⁵ and repeated by Andrew Lang in the Border Edition, that much of Oldbuck's talk about Roman remains is quotation from Alexander Gordon's *Itinerarium Septentrionale*, the book Oldbuck was taking home when he went for the coach in Ch. I. For example, when Lovel remarks⁵⁶ that the letters "C.C.P.F." on a Roman stone were explained by the Dutch antiquaries as *Caius Caligula Pharum Fecit*, he is quoting Gordon. Oldbuck's error of interpreting "A.D.L.L." on a supposedly Roman stone as *Agricola Dicavit Libens Lubens*, until assured by Edie Ochiltree that the correct explanation was "Aiken Drum's Lang Ladle," is an example of Scott's willingness to treat antiquarian controversy as a joke, rather than to engender acrimony in the manner of Ritson, Pinkerton, and

⁵³ *Minstrelsy*, IV, 352.

⁵⁴ *Poetical Works*, VIII, 390-4.

⁵⁵ *Reminiscences of Old Edinburgh*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1878), II, 176. Henceforth cited as Wilson.

⁵⁶ *Antiquary*, I, 62.

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Chalmers. (In these modern days, when Scots songs are no longer common property, it may not be amiss to remark that Scott was referring to the song whose chorus runs "And he played upon a ladle, and his name was Aiken Drum.")

In a dialogue between Oldbuck and Hector McIntyre,⁵⁷ the genuine Ossianic ballads of the Scottish Highlands are parodied in a manner which shows that Scott had followed the famous "Ossian" controversy, knew the genuine ballads in translation, and wished to show the difference between them and the romantic dreams of James Macpherson—not by means of a slashing Dissertation *à la* Malcolm Laing, but by humorous exaggeration. Once more, antiquarian controversy becomes a source of innocent merriment. The squabble between St. Patrick and Ossian, in Hector McIntyre's recitation, about the relative merits of the Psalms of David and the tales of the Fenian warriors, really does have a basis in the original ballads: "Greater the worth of one stout troop that Fionn of the Fian used to bring, than thyself and thy Lord of piety altogether."⁵⁸ If Ossian, in the original, does not tell St. Patrick that he is little better than an ass, and threaten to wring his bald head from his shoulders (see Hector McIntyre's improvised "translation") there is at least a prototype in another dialogue, this time between two warriors, one of whom says "'Tis the speech of a fool that is in thy mouth . . . were it not in Fionn's presence that I find thee, thy head should lack a body."⁵⁹—Oldbuck's contemptuous remarks about the bare-breeched Celts as compared with their valiant Gothic conquerors, are of course pure Pinkerton.⁶⁰

The controversies between Oldbuck and Wardour are full of genuine echoes of real-life antiquarian discussion. Wardour thought it lese-majesty to doubt the existence of any of the hundred and odd Scots Kings whose "portraits" hung upon the walls of Holyrood,⁶¹ Sir George ("Bloody") Mackenzie, in controversy with Bishop William Lloyd of St. Asaph, said it would be his duty, as Lord Advocate of

⁵⁷ *Antiquary*, II, 126.

⁵⁸ *Heroic Poetry from the Book of the Dean of Lismore*, Scottish Gaelic Texts Society (Edinburgh, 1939), p. 129.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁶⁰ For John Pinkerton's violent anti-Celticism, see his *Disquisition on . . . the Scythians or Goths and Enquiry into the History of Scotland preceding the Reign of Malcolm III*, 2 vols. (London, 1789). The *Disquisition* is included in Vol. II of the *Enquiry*, but its part-title carries the date 1787.

⁶¹ *Antiquary*, I, 81.

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Scotland, to prosecute for lese-majesty any person who should express such views on Scottish soil.⁶²

When the guests were assembling at Monkbarns for the dinner-party which ended in the famous quarrel about the Picts between Oldbuck and Wardour, Oldbuck remarked⁶³ that whereas Mahommed had rejected bells and trumpets in favour of the voice as the established mode of calling the faithful to prayer, he, Oldbuck, had rejected the voice and the gong in favour of the bell as the best mode of calling the family to dinner. When Scott was writing this, his mind must have been already engaged on the after-dinner quarrel, during which Wardour speaks about the Pictish towers at Brechin and Abernethy,⁶⁴ for we read in Robert Henry's *History*: "Other writers are of opinion that the design of these circular towers (of which one is still remaining at Abernethy and another at Brechin) was, to be places from whence the people were called to public worship by the sound of a horn or trumpet, before the introduction of bells."⁶⁵

Oldbuck's vociferation during the quarrel-scene⁶⁶ of "Pikar, Pihar, Piochtar, Piaghter, or Peughtar" is again pure Pinkerton. Although the "beadroll of unbaptised jargon," i.e. the names of the Pictish Kings, may recall David Hume's "beadroll of barbarous [Anglo-Saxon] names,"⁶⁷ the names which set Sir Arthur Wardour coughing have all some sort of justification in the sources—even Eachen Macfungus, who seems to be a variant of Pinkerton's "Hungus, son of Fergus."⁶⁸ "The fumes of conceit, folly, and falsehood, fermenting in the brains of some mad Highland seannachie," is probably a direct reminiscence of Pinkerton's "fruits of folly and falsehood" etc.⁶⁹

When the Earl of Glenallan spends an evening at Monkbarns, Oldbuck subjects⁷⁰ him to a reading of his paper on the hill-fort of

⁶² Sir George Mackenzie, *A Defence of the Antiquity of the Royal Line of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1685).

⁶³ *Antiquary*, I, 92.

⁶⁴ *Antiquary*, I, 100.

⁶⁵ Robert Henry, *History of Great Britain*, 6 vols. (London, 1771-93), II, 400.

⁶⁶ *Antiquary*, I, 98-103.

⁶⁷ David Hume, *The History of England*, 8 vols. (London, 1812), I, 47. This work appeared in 1754-61. Henceforth cited as Hume.

⁶⁸ Pinkerton, *Enquiry*, I, 294.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 237.

⁷⁰ *Antiquary*, II, 203.

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Quickensbog. The name, he says, cannot mean "couch-grass bog," as it seems to do; "quickens" stands for "whilkens" or "whacken," and "bog" is a corruption of "burgh." This vastly entertaining parody on linguistic speculation may have no certain prototype, but David Buchanan's 17th Century "Description of Edinburgh"⁷¹ at least shows how well Scott knew the sort of thing he was laughing at. Buchanan rejects the derivation "Edwin's burgh," and proceeds to pour forth a most learned and diverting medley of Greek, French, Welsh, Saxon and Gaelic words, with a little Hebrew and Chaldean thrown in, from which cloud of cabalistic symbols emerges the conclusion that "Edinburgh" means "Winged Rock."—Scott had to restrict himself to Latin, Saxon, and Scots.

The Earl of Glenallan is represented as a man whose early life was promising, but whose dawn was quickly overcast by the disaster of his secret marriage, and the suicide of his wife, whereafter he became a stern and melancholy recluse. Reviewing Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials*, Scott says of that famous bibliophile, the 3rd Duke of Roxburghe: "Youthful misfortunes . . . had cast an early shade of gloom over his prospects, and given to one so splendidly endowed with the means of enjoying society that degree of reserved melancholy which prefers retirement to the splendid scenes of gaiety."⁷² The misfortune referred to was no doubt the alleged breaking off of Roxburghe's proposed marriage, for reasons of state. The lawyers' "gleesome anticipations" of a "great Glenallan cause" (*Antiquary*, II, 87), which might follow the death of the recluse without heirs, may therefore be connected with the litigation about the Roxburghe title which followed the death of the book-collecting Earl's short-lived successor. The sale of Roxburghe's great library and the foundation of the Roxburghe Club had taken place recently (1812) when *The Antiquary* was written. From all this it seems reasonable to suppose that the character of Glenallan is one result of Scott's interest in history, historians and antiquaries, and that Glenallan House is Fleurs.

⁷¹ *Macfarlane's Geographical Collections*. Scottish History Society, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1906-8), II, 636.

⁷² Pitcairn Review, 213 (*Prose Works*, XXI).

(To be continued)

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